

The Spire

FEBRUARY 5, 2023

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

VOL. 65, No. 6

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington, 630 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476

• *Gathered 1733*

Our Stewardship Mosaic

One of the gifts of being back in the Sanctuary is enjoying the light-filled beauty of our mosaic. It invites the eyes and mind to follow its graceful lines, evoking growth and nature as the universe expands.

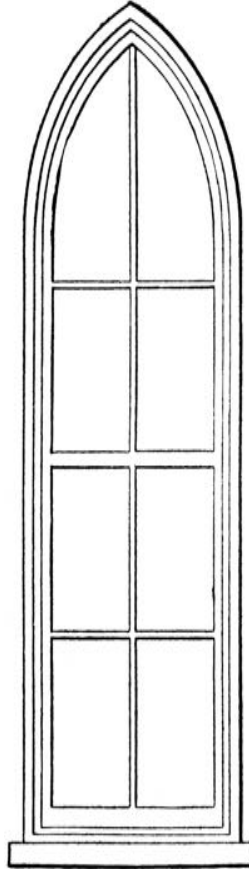
It has a depth of meaning that goes beyond beauty. It was commissioned after much discussion, led by the Sanctuary Artwork Committee, which was chaired by Louise Strayhorn and included First Parish artists Anne Goodwin and Nancy Crasco.

The mosaic's creator, Cynthia Fisher, incorporated bits and pieces donated by the congregation. There is sea glass from Star Island, a piece of the Berlin Wall, a Red Sox earring, a grandmother's buttons, a brick fragment from a warehouse that held enslaved people, a jewelry-box key, and much more. These mementoes came from our homes, our childhoods, and places around the world. Together they represent the power of individuals coming together.

We've chosen our mosaic as the symbol of our upcoming Stewardship Campaign, which begins next month. The theme of "Committing to What Matters" gives us each the opportunity to reflect on what's personally important to us. What matters most to each individual will vary, but the combination, the bringing together of all of us, lets First Parish commit to what matters in the world. Just like the mosaic, each one of us is an interwoven piece of our whole beloved spiritual community.

Please plan to make a generous pledge to support the life of that community.

— Marie Meteor, Stewardship Committee



Our Remembrance Corner

The First Parish Remembrance Corner provides a quiet seating area and a place to sponsor a lasting memorial on pavers inscribed with your message. It is just outside the rear door of the Sanctuary.

We can order pavers only when we have enough to cover the cost of engraving, shipping, and installation. Several parishioners want to sponsor new pavers, and we are hoping for enough orders to install them this spring. Perhaps you could organize folks to contribute toward pavers in memory of long-term church members who are gone but not forgotten, or to celebrate some of our wonderful church programs.

A 4 x 8-inch paver is \$95, and an 8 x 8-inch paver costs \$180. Please fill out the on-line order form on the church website, at www.firstparish.info, or e-mail Barbara Tosti at memorialgarden@firstparish.info.

Shinn Service

This year's annual Shinn Service, sponsored by the Social Justice Committee, will be on February 12 and focus on civics, featuring Dr. Danielle Allen, founder and director of the Democratic Knowledge Project at Harvard University. Allen is a political theorist and a former Democratic candidate for governor. After the service a light lunch will be served, and Allen will discuss calls to action in support of democracy.

Music in February

This month the music program will present a variety of styles. Some Sundays will feature works inspired and arranged by African American composers in observance of Black History Month. The choir will sing anthems composed or arranged by Rollo Dilworth, Louis Armstrong, Mark Miller, and Melanie DeMore, incorporating the words of Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou.

On February 19 we welcome Diane Taraz to lead us in joyous song.

Looking ahead, we invite people to sing with the choir on Easter, April 9. The service will feature strings, brass, and organ for anthems and hymns. Contact me at music@firstparish.info with any questions and for the rehearsal schedule.

— Jonathan Colby, Director of Music

Drop By for an “Open House”

Break out of the winter chill by joining friends at a First Parish Open House. Come to the Parlor on Thursdays, February 9 and 16, from 4 to 5:30 pm to learn a new recipe, chat over tea, or just read a book in a comfy chair. Next month’s Open Houses will also be on Thursday afternoons, on March 9 and 24.

Land Acknowledgment Workshops

Please join the Indigenous Justice Working Group (IJWG) for virtual workshops on March 1 and 29 to explore First Parish’s relationship to the grave injustices experienced by the Indigenous people of Massachusetts. We will learn about and confront these injustices in hopes of healing, and move forward together toward a more just future.

In 2020 the Unitarian Universalist Association passed an Action of Immediate Witness calling on all congregations to “Address 400 Years of White Supremacist Colonialism.” To read the entire statement, visit www.uua.org/action/statements/address-400-years-white-supremacist-colonialism.

Our working group is answering the UUA’s call to acknowledge the Indigenous peoples connected with the land occupied by our church and find ways to act in solidarity with them. We are fortunate to collaborate with Silvermoon LaRose and Lorén Spears, executive and assistant directors at the Tomaquag Museum, as we seek the truth of the past and begin our repair work in the present. For more about the Tomaquag Museum, please visit www.tomaquagmuseum.org.

The workshop on March 1 introduces us to the Indigenous people whose land we occupy, the history of displacement by the United States, and an introduction to the process of Land Acknowledgment.

Part two on March 29 will explore whom we acknowledge, how we can make it more than a performance, the creation of an action plan, and how to use our Land Acknowledgment.

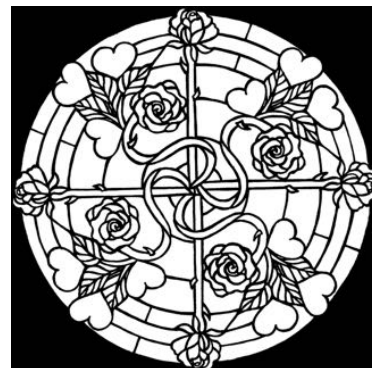
We anticipate that our Land Acknowledgment will be voted upon at our Annual Meeting on May 21. Participating in this virtual workshop will better enable you to be a part of this process.

If you have any questions, contact ijwg@firstparish.info.

— Ellen Leigh, Chair
Indigenous Justice Working Group

“Food is Love” Millennials Dinner

On Tuesday, February 14, younger adults are invited to a casual evening of cooking and conversation. We will gather from 6 to 8 pm in the Parlor. Bring friends and flatmates to join Rev. Erica for community and connection.



We’ll supply the ingredients and the set-up — you bring yourselves and a desire to connect with others. Whether you have visited First Parish only once, joined the church recently, or merely passed by the meetinghouse on the way to work, **all are welcome!**

RSVP to Amy at food-is-love-dinner@firstparish.info to let us know how many to expect and any dietary restrictions you may have.

Congregational Art Show

The Congregational Art Show provides an opportunity for us to present what we have created, what we have noticed, what we are thinking. It is a wonderful way to share a part of yourself through artwork of many kinds, including painting, fabric art, sculpture, and photography.

The show will open with a reception on March 5 and continue in the Parlor until June 15.

Each person can submit two pieces (depending on the numbers), which must be ready to hang with a wire on the back, side to side, and not too large to fit

comfortably in the Parlor. Three-dimensional pieces will be displayed in the glass case in the Narthex (the main entrance just outside the Sanctuary).

Submissions are due by February 15. Please fill out the form on our church website, at www.firstparish.info/artshow/aow-submission-form/

Send any questions to artshow@firstparish.info.

— The Art Show Team:
Jim Ptacek, Peggy Gardiner, Deb Lewis,
Carol Chamberlain, and Steph Miserlis

Summer on an Island, Anyone?

Many people from First Parish spend time each summer on Star Island, a conference center on the Isles of Shoals, off the coast of New Hampshire. Star Island is looking to fill four positions for this summer. If these positions interest you, or if you know a friend, colleague, or neighbor who would be a good fit, please direct them to apply.

The staff on Star are called Pelicans, and the way to apply is to fill out a Pelican application and indicate interest in one of these roles. You can find the Pelican application at starisland.org/working/#seasonal.

The Vaughn Cottage Curator helps research and share the island's history, setting up and caring for the Vaughn museum by selecting artifacts to display. The curator also leads several tours each week and is available to help researchers find information in the island's archives.

The Music Director works with Ministers of the Week and conference leaders to provide music during morning and evening chapel services, supports conference musicians, and brings weekly Pel Shows to life by helping to showcase the talents within the Pelican community.

The Art Coordinator helps conferences with youth and adult programming, and also cares for the Art Barn to make sure it is ready to welcome a variety of art projects.

The Marine Lab Naturalist, based at the Rutledge Marine Lab, sets up exhibits for island visitors to explore and leads walks that bring people up close to the seascape and its fascinating inhabitants.

There is lots of information about Star at www.starisland.org. Direct any questions you may have to office@starisland.org.

What is the Stewardship Committee?

"Stewardship" (according to *Merriam-Webster*) is "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." For the Stewardship Committee, that means raising money to pay for what matters to all of us: caring for our church community.

The committee asks people to pledge during the annual Stewardship Campaign — to make a commitment to contribute to First Parish over the next fiscal year (starting in July and ending in June). We create the campaign, which involves many tasks:

- We work with the Parish and Finance Committees to **set budget goals** for the year.
- We **plan opportunities for people to connect** and learn more about how our church works.
- We **set up meetings** between Visiting Stewards and members of the congregation so people can ask questions and learn more about First Parish.
- We **design materials**, from fact sheets to website pages, to educate the community financial issues, the budget, opportunities, and challenges.
- We **keep track** of progress and follow up to ensure we meet our goals.

With such a broad charge, the committee needs members with a variety of skills: visual design, data analysis, project management, event planning, and a shared passion for this community. Knowledge of fundraising is not necessary.

We are a seasonal committee, meeting November through March, with frequent meetings (both via Zoom and in-person) from mid-January to early April.

Of course, not all stewardship work is done by committee members. We also need people to help at a single event, setting up or in the kitchen, or who can help with graphic design and writing, or manage the data during the heat of the campaign. Of prime importance are the many volunteers who sign up to be Visiting Stewards, meeting one-on-one with members of the congregation.

Please join us, either at the committee level, or in response to calls for specific help. It's incredibly rewarding to be part of something so fundamental to the health of our community. Contact us at stewardship@firstparish.info.

— The Stewardship Committee:
John Anderson, Stephanie Fransoza, Marie Meteer,
Sue Sheffler, Amy Speare, and Heidi Swarts



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The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, March 5
Submissions due by Sunday, February 26
Items may be edited for space and clarity.

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If you do not have e-mail, contact the office.

The Spire generally deals with the big picture.
Time-sensitive details belong in the Weekly E-mail
Bulletin – send to *weekly@firstparish.info*
by Wednesday at noon.

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